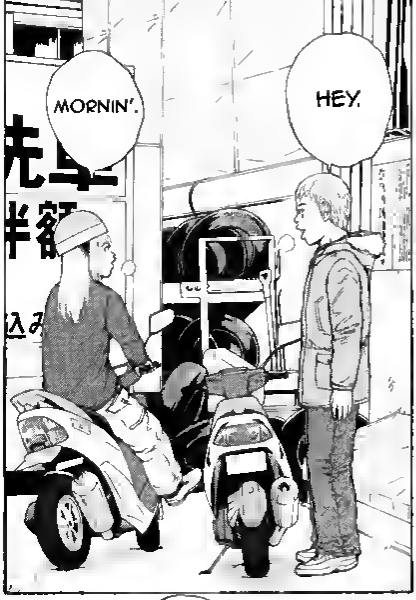
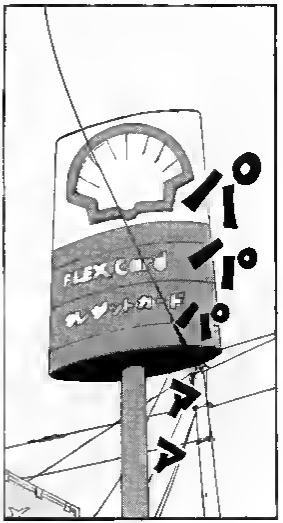
CHAPTER 53
ICHIOU VALENTINE


MORNIN'.
HEY.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HAPPY VALEN-TINE'S DAY!!

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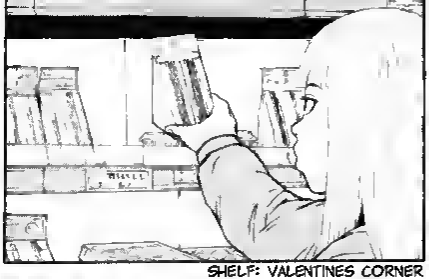
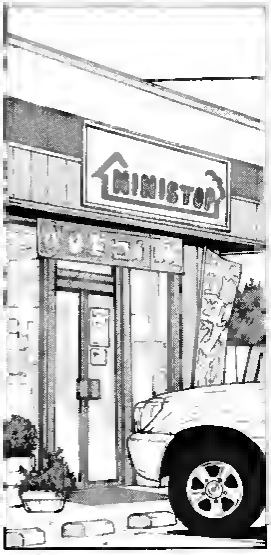
WH-WHAT?
TAKE-CHAN!! HERE YOU GO ~ <3

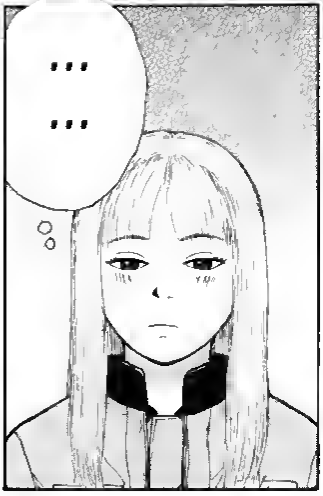
I-I DIDN'T BRING ANY FOR YOU!
UM... CHIIKO-SAN... I KNOW THAT IT WOULD ONLY BE OBLIGATORY TO GIVE ME CHOCOLATE BUT..
WELL, I WANTED TO GIVE IT TO YOU FIRST THING IN THE MORNING ~~~
DON'T JUST GIVE IT TO ME LIKE THAT!
...SATOSHI WAS SUPER FIDGETY YESTERDAY... IS THIS WHY?
はぁ
I FIGURED ..
ITS VALEN-TINE'S DAY...
HAMON

RIGHT NOW, I NEED TO THINK ABOUT MY PLANS FOR THE FUTURE AND COME UP WITH EVEN BIGGER GOALS!!
I DON'T CARE ABOUT VALENTINE'S DAY!!
NO!!
I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT..
THAT'S WEIRD, CHIIKO DIDN'T LEAVE ME ANY CHOCOLATES ON THE KOTATSU..
IT'S AN EXPECTATION~
THERE SHOULD BE CHOCOLATES.
HAMON
BE AN ADULT!!
BE A MAN!!
Community Plaza
OKAY.
I'M TAKING A BREAK NOW-



SHELF: VALENTINES CORNER



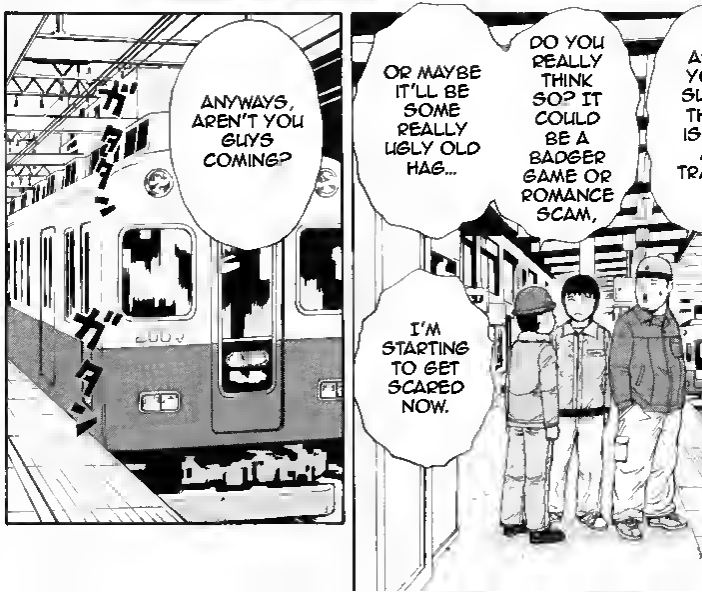


NATURALLY~! I'VE BEEN HOLDING ON TO IT SINCE THIS MORNING AS IF WE WERE A PART OF ME*.
ARE THOSE CHOCO-LATES FROM SAYURI-CHAN?
IS THAT SO... THAT'S GREAT.
I'M GLAD I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO GET SOME EXPERI-ENCE.
TL NOTE: IT'S A SAYING, "KEEPING SOMETHING CLOSE LIKE IT IS SKIN"
UGH...
DID YOU GET ANY?
YEAH~ ...
IT WOULD BE A WASTE TO EAT IT-
GUESS HE WANTED TO TAKE ADVAN-TAGE OF IT BEING A HOLIDAY AND ALL.
IT'S WEIRD THAT SHIGE WOULD WANT TO MEET UP ON A DAY LIKE THIS.

TODAY IS A GAME OF WIN OR LOSE, BOYS.
I-IS THERE SOME-THING WRONG?
YOU LOOK NICE IN THAT.
SO, HOW'S IT BEEN GOING ON THAT DATING SITE?
THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING!?
I'VE BEEN ON IT SINCE AROUND THE END OF LAST YEAR...
AREN'T SITES LIKE THOSE USUALLY SCAMS?
IN GENERAL, IT'S PRETTY DIFFICULT TO FIND A REPUTABLE ONE... SO FAR, I'VE ONLY USED SAKURA*
I PAYED A LOT OF MONEY TO FIGURE THAT OUT...
AND HAVE BEEN GETTING LOTS OF STRANGE CREDIT CARD CHARGES.

AND SINCE IT'S TODAY, I WAS KINDA HOPING TO RECEIVE SOME CHOCO-LATES...
WE EXCHANGED NUMBERS BUT I HAVEN'T TALKED TO HER OVER THE PHONE YET..
SHE'S A 20-YEAR-OLD AT A TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY WHO APPAR-ENTLY JUST BROKE UP WITH HER BOYFRIEND.

TL NOTES: HE MENTIONS VARIOUS FORMS OF ROMANCE RELATED SCAMS, BLACKMAIL AND TRICKERY


ANYWAYS, AREN'T YOU GUYS COMING?
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ARE YOU SURE THIS ISN'T A TRAP?
DO YOU REALLY THINK SO? IT COULD BE A BADGER GAME OR ROMANCE SCAM,
OR MAYBE IT'LL BE SOME REALLY UGLY OLD HAG...
I'M STARTING TO GET SCARED NOW.

WH-WHERE DID YOU SEE THAT!? THAT WAS NOTHING...
YOU GAVE SOME TO NAKAYAMA!
WAH~ YOU MUST BE SUPER DESPERATE!!
Shell

WHY SHOULD I GIVE ANY TO YOU TWO!?
YEAH ~!
HEY, CAN I GET SOME CHOCOLATE?

SHE SHOULD BE WAITING IN FRONT TO THE SIGN-BOARD.

JR京橋駅
14,050

I THINK THAT'S HER. SHE SAID SHE WOULD BE WEARING A FLORAL SHIRT AND RED SKIRT.
ARE YOU SURE THAT'S HER?
SHE'S CUTE!

O-OKAY.
I'M TRUSTING YOU TWO ON THIS ONE.

I'VE GONE TOO FAR TO TURN BACK NOW!!
AFTER YOU GO UP TO HER A SCARY LOOKING GUY IS GONNA COME OVER AND MAKE YOU PAY HIM A BUNCH OF MONEY!!
I KNEW IT WAS A TRAP!!

ゴク
...E-
EXCUSE ME...
HIROKO -SAN?
HUH?
Y-
YES!
...SHIGE-RU-SAN?

HUH...
UM... HERE'S SOME CHOCO-LATE. MORE-OR-LESS
BYE.
HUH?
HUH?
I-I'M SORRY!!
タタタ
I GUESS IT WASN'T A TRAP.

D-DO YOU WANT TO GO GET SOME DRINKS?
WE'LL BE OUT UNTIL THE MORNING.
...I'M GOING HOME...
ぎゅ
...DO YOU THINK HE'LL ACTUALLY EAT THAT...?
WHO KNOWS ...
VALENTINE'S DAY IS AWESOME... YEAH...
BUT I STILL WANT CHOCO-LATE...
I HAVEN'T GOTTEN ANY YET..

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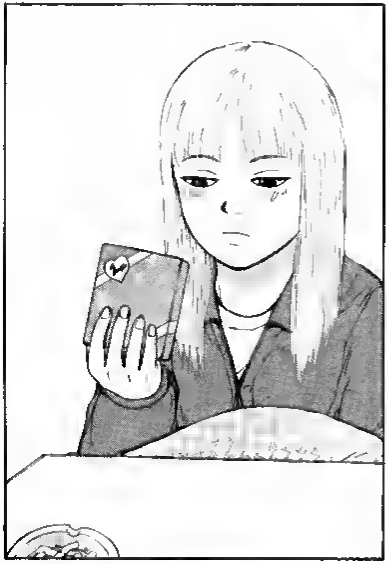
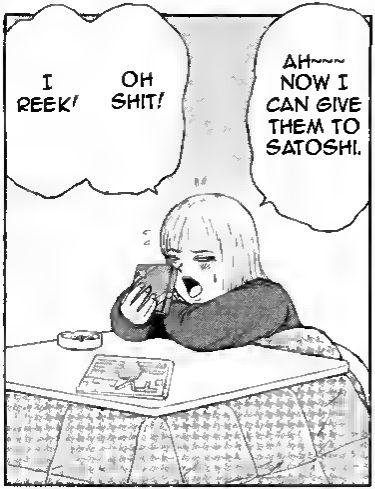
HM?
OH, IT'S THE GUY ON THE SECOND FLOOR'S GIRL-FRIEND...

ME AND MY BOY-FRIEND GOT INTO A FIGHT BEFORE I COULD GIVE THEM TO HIM SO...
YOU GAVE YOUR CHOCO-LATE TO THE CAT?
HA-HA!
EH?
DID YOUR GIRL-FRIEND GIVE ANY TO YOU?
NO...
SHE DOESN'T CARE MUCH ABOUT VALEN-TINE'S DAY.
IS THAT RIGHT?
BUT DON'T PEOPLE WHO ARE CLOSE GIVE THESE KINDS OF THINGS TO EACH OTHER...? I GUESS I UNDER-STAND...



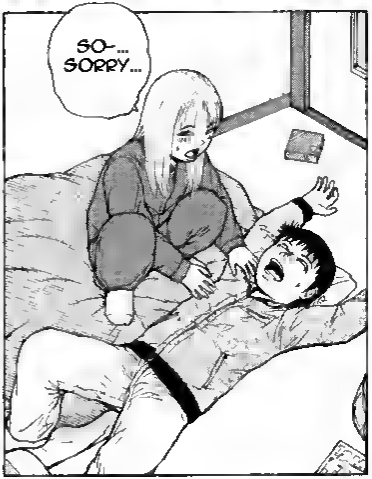
SO CHIIKO PROBABLY DIDN'T GET ANY!!
YEAH! IT'S NORMAL NOT TO GIVE CHOCO-LATE!


I REEK!
OH SHIT!
AH~~~ NOW I CAN GIVE THEM TO SATOSHI.

IT'S GOOD THE SHOP STILL HAD SOME I COULD BUY... EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY.

ガチャ
I'M HOME!
AH!
かあああ
IS THAT CHOCO-LATE?!
CH-CHO CO-LATE!!
UWAH!

DON'T MESS WITH ME!!
HERE'S YOUR VALEN-TINE'S CHOCO-LATE <3
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL ONLY BE GETTING THESE FROM YOUR MUM THIS YEAR!



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